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GRAFTON, MA

2022 JAN 13 PM 1:08

**SELECT BOARD
Meeting Minutes
November 16, 2021**

A meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Vice Chair, Colleen Roy. In attendance were: Vice Chairman, Colleen Roy, Clerk, Mathew Often, Ray Mead, and Doreen DeFazio. Staff in attendance: Town Administrator, Evan Brassard and Management Analyst and Communication Specialist, William Blake.

The Board recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ed Prisby approached the podium to discuss the "John Stevens" Agenda Item. The Board requested that comments be saved until they reached that portion of the agenda.

Jim Gallagher approached the podium to discuss the "John Stevens" Agenda Item, he was also asked to save his comments until they reached the portion of the agenda.

SCHEDULE

Public Hearing Pole Petition

Canceled per the request of National Grid. This hearing has not been rescheduled as of the time of the meeting.

Grafton Common Improvements – Contract Change Orders

Paul Scarlett and Andy Deschenes were in attendance to discuss two change orders, one for the Bandstand and one for the Backflow Preventor.

Mr. Scarlett began with an update on the project. The original project scope is approaching completion. There are minor work items remaining, including work on the fence. Mr. Scarlett informed the Board that no trees were removed due to work done by

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the project. Several were deemed unhealthy by an arborist, while others were involved in "acts of God."

Mr. Scarlett stated that the cost for both change orders can be done within the current project budget. Accessibility changes made to the Bandstand will maintain the historic nature of the structure. All work being done was identified by the Town ADA Consultant.

Discussion pivoted to the Backflow Preventor. This is an EPA requirement, as it prevents water from flowing back into the drinking water supply in the event of a flood. The installation is the Town's responsibility. The Grafton Water District is offering to provide some of the supplies needed for the installation.

Mr. Deschenes stated that they did consult with an outside company regarding the cost of the Bandstand, to ensure that the price is accurate. The price reflected in the change-order is appropriate.

Mr. Mead went through the overall cost of the change order and discussed the feasibility of removing the current Bandstand and putting in an entirely new replacement. Discussion ensued amongst the Board, Mr. Scarlett, and Mr. Deschenes on the feasibility and practicality of a total replacement.

Mr. Scarlett asked the Town Administrator about a motor vehicle accident in early Spring that impacted three sections of fence, four granite posts, and a cherry tree. Ms. Roy asked if insurance would cover these repairs. Mr. Brassard stated that it would not be covered, as insurance does not cover fences or vegetation.

Ms. DeFazio expressed opposition to a complete replacement of the Bandstand, stating that the current structure is a piece of the character of the Common.

Ms. Roy asked for further explanation on the cost saving measure of not redoing the foundation of the Bandstand. Mr. Deschenes stated that it was simply not necessary. Paying more and doing additional work to add a frost wall did not have any "bang for the buck." Mr. Often asked if they would still be bolstering the current foundation, which Mr. Deschenes confirmed.

Additional discussion ensued about materials used to maintain the historical nature of the structure.

Ms. DeFazio asked about the timeline for completion. Mr. Deschenes stated that JAM is ready to begin work and has no problem working into the middle of December if need. Painting may be pushed to the Spring, however.

Mr. Often moved that the Board vote to approve the Grafton Common Improvements as presented and authorize the chairman to sign, Ms. DeFazio seconded, the motion passed 4-0.

Page Contracting, Inc. – Demolition of 60 Depot Street

Mr. Brassard provided background, stating that this property was taken by the Town in 2018, and that the current structure needed to be demolished.

Mr. Often asked if there were any plans to use the vacant property for parking for a nearby land trust property. Mr. Brassard stated that the Town will consider it, but it may not be feasible.

Mr. Often made a motion to sign the demolition contract with Page Contracting for 60 Depot Street. Ms. DeFazio seconded; the motion passed 4-0.

Antonellis Construction Co., Inc – Building Department Service Window

Mr. Brassard provided background, stating that this contract would add an ADA accessible window to the building department, so that residents could better interact with staff. This window would be similar to the Planning Department window, but smaller.

Mr. Often made a motion to sign the contract with Antonellis Construction Company for the Building Department Service Window Project. Mr. Mead seconded; the motion passed 4-0.

One Day Beer and Wine License – Apple Tree Arts

This license is for a concert Apple Tree Arts will be holding on January 28, 2022.

Mr. Often made a motion to grant the One Day Beer and Wine License to Apple Tree Arts on January 28, 2022. Ms. DeFazio seconded; the motion passed 4-0.

One Day Beer and Wine License – Sunflower Shanty

Mr. Often moved that the Board vote to grant/deny a one-day beer and wine license to Sunflower Shanty, Trevor Houlden on November 21st, 26th & 27th and December 3rd, 4th, 10th, 11th 17th and 18th. Ms. DeFazio seconded; the motion passed 4-0.

John Stephens – Regarding Correspondence 25 Worcester Street Email

- Ron Warick Correspondence to Board

Ms. Roy stated that this agenda item will be handled as follows; Mr. Stephens sent in an email that will be read into the record, the Board will then have a discussion, at the conclusion of the discussion any residents wishing to make public comment will be able to so long as it is germane to the agenda item.

Mr. Steven's email was read into the record by Mr. Often. It can be found attached at the bottom of these minutes.

Ms. Roy opened the discussion to the Board and clarified that the discussion should stay to the topic at hand and not directly address or attack Mr. Stephens.

Mr. Mead spoke first, stating that the Town has twice voted to support 55+ housing at 25 Worcester Street. Because of this fact, the Board should move on from this topic and let the Affordable Housing Trust do its work. Ms. Roy corrected Mr. Mead stating that it had only been discussed at one town meeting.

Ms. Roy read a prepared statement regarding Mr. Warwick's correspondence to the Board. A copy of the statement can be found attached at the bottom of these minutes.

Ms. Roy then asked the Board's opinion on the statement. Mr. Mead stated that things are getting out of hand, and it is going to prevent anything from getting done. Ms. DeFazio stated that the core of the issue is still affordable housing, and stated that she wanted to support affordable housing, and ensure that progress is made on these issues.

Mr. Often stated his support for allowing public comment but wanted to limit comments to one to two minutes. Ms. Roy agreed, and also stated that no more threats would be tolerated by the Board.

Mr. Prisby was then recognized by the Chair. Mr. Prisby spoke to the need for support for the basic necessity of housing for his generation, the one above him, and the one coming after. Mr. Prisby stated that there was institutional opposition to affordable housing in the Town, and Mr. Stephen's email was not a "mistake". Mr. Prisby did not believe this to be a first amendment issue, as the first amendment does not cover the spread of disinformation.

Mr. Gallagher was then recognized by the Chair. He read a prepared statement, a copy of which can be found attached to the bottom of these minutes.

Mr. Brook Padgett was then recognized by the Chair. Mr. Padgett stated that he agreed with the Board's attempt to ease tension on the issue, but stated that the Board should try to not exacerbate the issue by continuing to put the item on the agenda.

Ms. Roy clarified that the item was placed back on the agenda to allow Mr. Stephens the chance to respond to the discussion on the public platform.

Ms. Marilyn Cusher was recognized over Zoom. Ms. Cusher stated that it is a disservice to the town to allow poor behavior of volunteers to go unaddressed.

Continuation of Public Hearing, Chapter 61A 116 Upton Road

Mr. Brassard began the discussion, stating that this discussion would be tied to another agenda item, the "116 Upton Street – Memorandum of Agreement" item.

A map of the parcel was shared on screen, a copy of which has been attached to the bottom of these minutes. This map shows the portion of the parcel that will be donated to the town, and the portion that will be developed.

There was no public comment.

Mr. Often made a motion to close the public hearing for Chapter 61A 116 Upton Street. Ms. DeFazio seconded; the motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Often made a motion to not exercise its right of first refusal for the parcel located at 116 Upton Road lot 10 property ID 076.000000010.0. Ms. DeFazio seconded; the motion passed 4-0.

Mr. Mead made a motion to sign the Memorandum of Agreement between the Town of Grafton and Upton Road Properties LLC, 116 Upton Road. Ms. DeFazio seconded; the motion passed 4-0.

RESIGNATIONS

Warden – Precinct Three

Mr. Often moved the Board vote to acknowledge and accept the resignation of Karen McInnis as Election Work & Warden of Precinct 3, effective November 1, 2021, and to send her a letter of thanks. Mr. Mead seconded; the motion passed 4-0.

Registrar

Mr. Often moved that the Board vote to acknowledge and accept the resignation of Diane Hutchinson-Fontana as Registrar of Voters, effective immediately, and to send her a letter of thanks. Ms. DeFazio Seconded the motion passed 4-0.

APPOINTMENTS/SELECT BOARD

Open Space and Recreation Committee

Mr. Often moved the Board to appoint Elizabeth Coveney to the Open Space and Recreation Committee for a term to expire on June 30, 2024. Ms. DeFazio seconded; the motion passed 4-0.

APPOINTMENTS/TOWN ADMINISTRATOR

Treasurer/Collector

This item was taken out of order and discussed immediately following the discussion on Grafton Common Improvements Change Orders.

Ms. Madeline Goodrich was in attendance to speak with the Board.

Mr. Brassard introduced Ms. Goodrich as the current Treasurer of Monson, she was offered the job as she was the top candidate to come out of the interview process.

Ms. Goodrich informed the Board that she had been in her current position for roughly six years, she has been a member of the MCTA for roughly five years.

Mr. Brassard provided additional background on Ms. Goodrich's work history in Monson.

Mr. Often made a motion that the Board vote to affirm the Town Administrators appointment of Madeline Goodrich as Treasurer/Collector. Ms. DeFazio seconded, the motion passed 4-0.

NEW BUSINESS

Appoint Interim Fire Chief

Ms. Roy asked if the Board was comfortable appointing the Fire Department's suggested candidate. The Board agreed. Mr. Mead asked about a compensation agreement. Mr. Brassard stated that he had been in contact with the Town's labor attorney and Mr. Cournoyer. Mr. Brassard stated that the best way to move forward is with a contract that protects both the Town and Mr. Cournoyer. Compensation had not been solidified yet but will be discussed. Council recommends that the compensation be a set amount. Mr. Brassard recommended including a sunset provision which could be extended if needed.

Mr. Often agreed with the appointment but stated that he wanted some sort of mechanism in place to ensure progress is made on the Fire Study recommendations. Mr. Brassard agreed, he also requested that reporting authority for the Interim Chief be delegated to him, to streamline communication and be conscious of Mr. Cournoyer's time.

Further discussion ensued on the need for the Interim Chief to pursue the recommendations in the Fire Study, as well as grant funding for future growth.

Mr. Often moved that the Board vote to appoint Paul Cournoyer as Interim Fire Chief effective January 1, 2022, pending successful implementation of a contract as negotiated by the Town Administrator and to delegate administrative authority over the Strong Chief to the Town Administrator. Mr. Mead seconded. Mr. Brassard asked that the motion be amended to only delegate authority for the life of the contract, Ms. DeFazio seconded.

The motion passed 4-0.

Purchase and Sale 17&27 Upton Street

Mr. Bruce Spinney was present from the Affordable Housing Trust.

Mr. Brassard began the discussion by sharing a presentation on the Purchase and Sale. This presentation can be found below.

Mr. Often asked Mr. Spinney to speak to collateralizing the land. Mr. Spinney stated that GSX was looking to offset some of the soft costs of the project, the AHT had to work out a grant program to be able to contribute to offset these costs. The grant is tied to the appreciated value of the land.

Mr. Spinney proceeded to discuss the impact of the project on the Town's Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI), as well as contingencies for the land if GSX backs out of the project at any time.

Discussion ensued amongst the board regarding a TIF with GSX, the timeline for project completion, and whether a Special town Meeting will be required.

116 Upton Street – Memorandum of Agreement

Previously discussed during the continued public hearing.

Proclamation

Mr. Often read the proclamation declaring November 16, 2021, as "Sheila Ide Day."

SELECT BOARD REPORTS

Ms. DeFazio provided a report on the Open Space and Recreation Committees' first meeting. As well as a report on the Waste Reduction and Recycling Committee.

TOWN ADMINISTRATOR REPORTS

Mr. Brassard clarified that the "Grafton Select Board" Facebook page was not linked to the Town in any way.

The ARPA Committee has met, and solicited input from Department Heads regarding potential projects.

Water issues on Main Street are being addressed. If any resident experienced water damage they should contact the Town for it to be recorded.

CORRESPONDENCE

Discussion ensued on Grafton, MA, being the center of mass for the State of Massachusetts.

DISCUSSION

Review of Annual Music License Applications

Mr. Brassard provided an explanation of the document in the packet, which provided the suggested language of the new license. Once the Board Approves the format, a digital version will be created on ViewPoint.

Mr. Often made a motion that the Board affirm the updated license form submitted by the Town Administrator as presented. Ms. DeFazio seconded; the motion passed 4-0.

Select Board, Chair, Email to Fire Department RE: Nov 9, 2021

This was passed over, to be placed on the agenda for a future meeting.

Review Fire Department Discussion from November 9, 2021, Meeting

Ms. DeFazio stated that this was intended to be a discussion for the Board on how the previous meeting went. However, since Mr. Cournoyer had already been appointed Interim Chief unanimously by the Board, there may not be need for further discussion.

The Board discussed and unanimously agreed that the meeting had gone well, and that the current Captain's of the Fire Department showed immense leadership in the plan they presented.

Fire Chief Search Committee

Ms. Roy opened discussion stating that much of the heavy lifting for the Search had been done, and the new committee would likely need to make minor changes to the job description.

Mr. Mead stated that he would like to see the Committee shrink slightly. To one member of the Fire Department, two Select Board representatives, one member at large, and the Town Administrator, with the removal of the Police Chief from the Committee.

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Further discussion ensued regarding the representation of the Fire Department on the Committee.

The Board then discussed the timeline of the Committee, and whether it should be disbanded after candidates were forwarded to the Select Board or after a new Chief has been hired.

Mr. Often made a motion the Board adopt the updated Charge for the Fire Chief Search Committee as discussed. Ms. DeFazio seconded; the motion passed 4-0.

Fire Chief Search; Timeline, Search Committee Charge, & Search Committee Composition

The Board felt that the nature of this Agenda Item had been covered in the previous item. No further discussion ensued.

MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Often moved that the Board accept the Meeting Minutes dated November 2, 2021, as presented. Ms. DeFazio seconded; the motion passed 4-0.

No further items were discussed.

Mr. Often made a motion to adjourn seconded by Ms. DeFazio to adjourn the meeting at 9:04 pm. The motion passed 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,
William Blake
Management Analyst/Communications Specialist

A video of the entire meeting can be viewed at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zILZF-unX58>

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